

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: IMCO, LI, EWWT

SUBJECT: LIBERIA'S CANDIDACY FOR ELECTION TO THE IMCO
COUNCIL.

REFERENCE: LIBERIA'S 2792

1. SUMMARY. THE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH THE EMBASSY AND
THE GOL THAT LIBERIA SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE IMCO
COUNCIL. HOWEVER, SINCE LIBERIA AND THE U. S. ARE IN
EFFECT IN DIRECT COMPETITION FOR THE SAME SEAT IN CATE-
GORY A, THE USG CANNOT SUPPORT THE GOL CANDIDACY IN THAT
CATEGORY. IF LIBERIA WOULD BE WILLING TO SEEK ELECTION
TO COUNCIL IN CATEGORY C, OR FOR ONE OF THE SIX NEW SEATS
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TO BE ADDED TO CATEGORY C ON APRIL 1, 1978, THE USG WOULD
ACTIVELY SUPPORT LIBERIA'S CANDIDACY. END OF SUMMARY.

2. THE DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT LIBERIA SHOULD BE A MEMBER
OF THE IMCO COUNCIL, DUE TO THE SIZE OF HER FLEET AND THE
RESULTANT LIBERIAN PAYMENT OF TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE
IMCO BUDGET. (THE DEPARTMENT NOTES, NEVERTHELESS, THAT

SUCH PAYMENT IS MADE FROM A SPECIAL FUND PROVIDED BY FOREIGN SHIP OWNERS WHO REGISTER THEIR VESSELS IN LIBERIA, AND NOT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY FROM THE LIBERIAN TREASURY.)

3. THERE IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IN LIBERIA'S DESIRE TO BE ELECTED TO THE COUNCIL IN CATEGORY A (MAJOR SHIP OPERATORS). WE EXPECT SEVEN IMCO MEMBERS TO COMPETE FOR THE SIX SEATS IN CATEGORY A. THE VOTES RECEIVED BY THESE SAME SEVEN CANDIDATES IN 1975 WERE AS FOLLOWS: UK, 68; JAPAN, 60; GREECE, 60; NORWAY, 55; USA, 55; USSR, 54; AND LIBERIA, 47. IF LIBERIA WERE TO BE ELECTED IN CATEGORY A, THE U. S. MIGHT VERY WELL BE THE MEMBER WHICH WOULD FAIL TO BE RE-ELECTED. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE U. S. ON THE IMCO COUNCIL IS A KEY ELEMENT IN U. S. MARITIME POLICY. ACCORDINGLY, THERE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE A NEGATIVE REACTION IN MOST QUARTERS IN THE U. S., INCLUDING THE CONGRESS, AS WELL AS THE MARITIME INDUSTRY (INCLUDING MARITIME LABOR) IF THIS OCCURRED. (FYI. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, LIBERIA'S FLAG OF CONVENIENCE IS CURRENTLY CONTROVERSIAL IN THE U. S. AND ELSEWHERE FOLLOWING THE RECENT SPATE OF OIL SPILLS AND OIL SPILL SCARES FOLLOWING THE ARGO MERCHANT AND THE ISSUE OF GENUINE LINK BETWEEN FLAG OF REGISTRY AND OWNERSHIP OF VESSEL AS DISCUSSED IN ILO, OECD, AND UNCTAD. END FYI.) THE U. S. DELEGATION CANNOT JEOPARDIZE ITS OWN SEAT IN CATEGORY A BY CONDUCTING A CAMPAIGN FOR LIBERIA IN THAT CATEGORY.

4. CATEGORY B (MAJOR CONSUMERS OF SEABORNE TRADE) IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE CATEGORY FOR LIBERIA, AND THERE IS EVEN MORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KEEN COMPETITION BETWEEN TEN MEMBERS FOR THE SIX SEATS IN CATEGORY B. THE VOTES IN CATEGORY B IN 1975 WERE AS FOLLOWS: CANADA, 53; BRAZIL, 52; CHINA, 50; FRANCE, 45; ITALY, 45; FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, 44; BELGIUM, 34; SPAIN, 31; AUSTRALIA, 27; SWEDEN, 20; AND LIBERIA, 18.

5. THEREFORE, THE ONLY CATEGORY WHERE THE U. S. DELEGATION COULD CAMPAIGN FOR LIBERIA IS CATEGORY C (GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION), WHICH IS TO BE ENLARGED FROM SIX TO TWELVE SEATS ON APRIL 1, 1978. (FYI. LIBERIA MAY HAVE SOME PROBLEMS DECIDING WHETHER TO COMPETE WITH G-77 COUNTRIES FOR ONE OF THE NEW SEATS IN CATEGORY C, WHERE HERETOFORE LIBERIA HAS NOT ENJOYED WIDE SUPPORT. END FYI.)

6. CAMPAIGNING FOR THE NEW SEATS IN CATEGORY C HAS ALREADY BEGUN. WE KNOW THAT BOTH INDIA AND NIGERIA ARE CAMPAIGNING FOR TWO OF THOSE SEATS. IF LIBERIA IS WILLING TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COMPETITION IN CATEGORY A, THE U. S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT LIBERIA'S CANDIDACY

FOR A SEAT IN THE ENLARGED CATEGORY C.

7. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO (A) INFORM APPROPRIATE GOL OFFICIALS THAT THE USG CANNOT SUPPORT LIBERIAN CANDIDACY FOR CATEGORY A; (B) URGE GOL WITHDRAWAL OF ITS CANDIDACY;

(C) AND INFORM GOL OFFICIALS THAT WE WOULD GIVE ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR LIBERIA'S ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL IN CATEGORY C. IF A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN IS TO BE WAGED FOR A SEAT FOR LIBERIA UNDER CATEGORY C, IT SHOULD BEGIN AT THE UPCOMING MEETING OF THE COUNCIL IN LONDON, MAY 23. EMBASSY REQUESTED TO INFORM DEPARTMENT OF THE GOL DECISION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. CHRISTOPHER

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